

Dear Chairman Reichner and members of the House Education Committee;

As I have visited friends, family, land, and mineral rights owners across eastern Montana after moving back to this end of the state five years ago, I have been assailed with stories of trucks, roads, dust, noise, changed landscapes at almost every meeting.

While the stories spoke to the challenges of adapting to a fast paced industry that is again seeing an upswing in Eastern Montana, most people talked with pride. They knew that that what was happening to them, their land, their pace of life, would benefit their school, their county, and their state. They knew it would provide tax relief for neighbors not lucky enough to have mineral rights as they struggled to make ends meet farming and ranching. They knew the activity might bring new families that would stabilize their schools and help their communities to survive.

Lately I have been getting photos from some of these same people who are now saying, "You're a superintendent, you tell these legislators what we deal with, you make sure that they understand what we put up with." They want you to know what it's like to deal with the roads, the noise, the dust. They need you to realize that while a farmer can make extra money using his tractor to plow out oil well sites in the winter, that same farmer is no longer available to help his neighbor get out of his yard. He is busy.

They see their school advertize aide jobs for \$15 to \$20 per hour and get no takers. They wonder how they will support those wages if the money that comes from the impact that oil has on schools is taken from those schools.

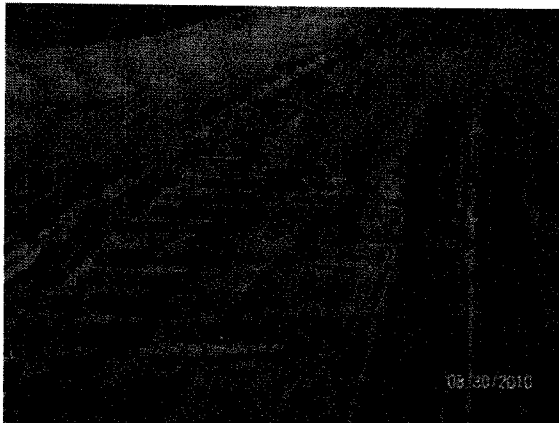
One bus driver yesterday told me that at \$20 per hour for Wibaux bus drivers receive is not enough: at his school he earns a flat \$90 per day. Yet neither school can keep a bus driver, the oil patch starts drivers with no experience at a minimum of \$35 per hour. And there are never enough drivers.

Their message, and mine is simple: The dust will be battled as long as the wells produce oil. The traffic and damage to roads from trucks will be here as long as there are wells. The inflated wages will be born by schools and local employers as long as oil remains a part of the economy. The needy children, the transient families, the housing crunch will be a problem as long as the boom continues, and then the reverse will be a problem until the next boom. The impact is local. What remains of the commodity money should remain local for local relief.

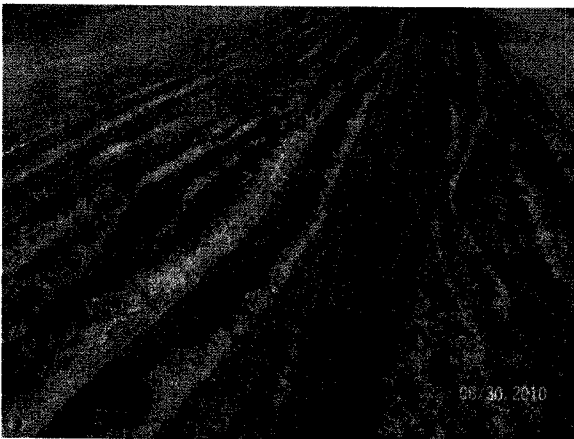
Sincerely,

Renee Rasmussen, long time area resident, and currently Superintendent at Wibaux Public School

Below are some of the photos given to me by area people detailing some of the impact.



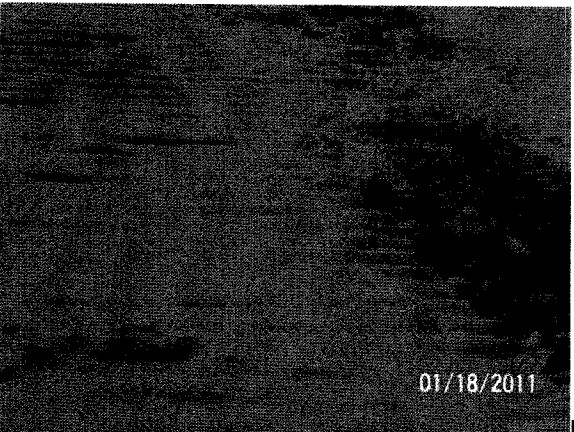
Road impacted by oil truck traffic



Main road in county after oil traffic and rain.



Rig right next to house. Well was good. Home owner has no mineral rights on this well, but will deal with trucks, sound, and visual impact until well ceases to be viable.



Road right past homeowner from trucks setting up rig this winter.

# **BAINVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Dennis Nelson  
Chairman

Thale Ludwick  
Clerk

409 Tubman PO Box 177  
Bainville, Montana 59212  
Phone (406) 769-2321 FAX (406) 769-3291

Brandy Hansen  
Superintendent

Lyanna Gable  
Secretary

February 9, 2011

Dear Chairman Reichner and Members of the House Education Committee,

With the impacts of our country's economic situation affecting not only the Montana budget, but struggling families in all corners of our state, we commend you for your service. As you continue your dedicated work, the Bainville Public School Board would like to express our concerns with House Bill 136 currently before your committee.

The proposal represented in HB 136 targets nearly 90% of Bainville Public School's adopted budget to instead be sent to a new government program identified as the "Teach Montana" account. The impact of this cut would fall disproportionately on a narrow range of school districts with local tax revenues from oil and gas development. For years, school districts like ours across Montana have been dealing with the positive and negative effects of oil and gas development. While the proponents of this bill would point to the small percentage of local oil and gas tax revenues that are eventually received by our district, we wish to remind you that this recent flurry of development also brings new challenges to our students, teachers, and community. While ignoring impacts to rural oil and gas communities, HB 136 would also compound them by forcing tax increases on our hard working citizens. Along with continuing to adjust to oil and gas activity in our communities, HB 136 would force our taxpayers to pay higher property taxes to help fill the hole in their local school's budget.

In Bainville, we stand ready to join citizens across Montana by working cooperatively with the House Education Committee as you work to adequately fund our state's education system. While some have instead chosen expediency over proactive solutions with HB 136, we look forward to working with you on proposals that responsibly address the needs of state government and local schools. We urge you to vote no on HB 136. Please contact any of the members of the Bainville school board if we can provide any further assistance to you as you consider this proposal.

Sincerely,

Dennis Nelson - Chairman of the Board  
Toby Romo, Garth Harmon, Lorrie Picard, and Todd Krogedal - Trustees